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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AVIAN FLU, CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

Summary: 1. Taiwan dailies October 22 - 24 focused on two local issues: President Chen Shui-bian started a campaign Saturday to boost the public support for DPP candidates in the year-end elections; Acting Kaohsiung City Mayor Yeh Chulan released Friday the investigative report on the scandal of the Kaohsiung Mass Transit system, and the report finds no major irregularities in the case.

2. With regard to editorials and commentaries, the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" editorialized that Taiwan should deal with China and the WHO at the same time in order to prevent avian flu from attacking Taiwan. The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" urged in its editorial (10/24) that the DPP government should work on Taiwan's economic problems and win the 2008 presidential elections in order to prevent China's annexation of Taiwan. Another editorial of "Taiwan Daily" (10/22) argued that both China and the United States should not oppose the Taiwan authorities in terms of using "Taiwan" as the name of the country. End summary.

I. Avian Flu

"The Bird Flu Has Come, but Taiwan Has to Face a Lot More Challenges"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (10/22):

". [I]n order to carry out well the prevention of a new wave of bird flu that has gotten on the world's nerves, Taiwan has to face a lot more challenges than other countries. In particular, [we should pay attention to] how Taiwan cooperates with China, a 'nest of viruses' viewed by international medical agencies; and how Taiwan seeks support from the World Health organization (WHO). In fact, Taiwan doesn't have enough 'chips' to overcome these two variables: there is only a strait between Taiwan and China, and cross-strait exchanges of passengers and goods are frequent. Smuggling in the coastal area has also become a blind spot to prevent bird flu outside the island, i.e. Taiwan's territory. The world depends on the WHO to manage and distribute the insufficient supply of Tamiflu. Since Taiwan is not covered under the WHO net, it becomes a hot potato for Taiwan to obtain vaccines that cannot be bought by money. ."

II. Cross-Strait Relations

1. "As Long as Taiwan People Support in 2008 Their Own Regime and Develop [Taiwan's] Economy Wholeheartedly, China Could Never Annex Taiwan"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 100,000] said in its editorial (10/24):

". Taiwan has faced a dilemma of domestic disturbance and foreign aggression: the pan-Blue alliance incorporated the pro-unification press, and they have not only showed pessimistic views toward Taiwan's future, but have actually destroyed Taiwan; China, on the other hand, played the role of a 'wire-puller.'. When the pan-Blue alliance and China talk about Taiwan, they express the attitude that Taiwan has nowhere to go, and the island could no longer survive; but when they talk about China, they show the feeling of prosperity and development, [with business] chances everywhere. This is quite a sharp contrast. . [The DPP government] should propose solutions that would effectively upgrade Taiwan's economy, and it should review the problem of the growing unemployment rate. It is pragmatic for the government to push for policies that will satisfy peoples' needs. ."

2. "China Constrains and Blockades [Taiwan's International Space] by Frightening Means, Due to the Reason that Taiwan Does Not Have an Independent National Sovereignty"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 100,000] editorialized that (10/22):

"The Constitution of the Republic of China (R.O.C.) that Taiwan has been using includes the territories and people of the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) and the People's

Republic of Mongolia. It is doubtless an infringement of sovereignty to China and Mongolia. Moreover, the P.R.C. has never recognized the existence of the R.O.C. Hence, the Beijing authorities have no reason to oppose the Taiwan people's plan to abandon the obsolete and unrecognized symbols, such as the name and the constitution of the R.O.C.

"On the other hand, the U.S. Senate passed the `Taiwan Relations Act' after the United States established diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China. The fact that the U.S. Senate did not name it as the `Republic of China Relations Act' means that the United States has identified Taiwan as an international legal body independent from China. ."

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